

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated August 16, 2007, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. To further the prosecution of this application, each of the rejections set forth in the Office Action has been carefully considered and is addressed below. The application as presented is believed to be in condition for allowance.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9, 11-19, 21-24, and 26-31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as purportedly being unpatentable over Pintsov (6,775,590), and rejects claims 10, 20, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as purportedly being obvious over Pintsov in view of various other references. In view of the amendments to claims 1, 11, and 21, Applicants respectfully disagree with each of these rejections.

Specifically, each of claims 1, 11, and 21 have been amended to include a limitation that relates in one way or another to automatically reading human-readable text on the at least one business reply mail piece using optical character recognition techniques while the at least one business reply mail piece is in the stream of mail pieces.

Pintsov fails to disclose or suggest this limitation. As shown in Figure 2 of Pintsov, processing system 102 obtains data on form 200 by scanning machine-readable control information (MRCI) 206, which is formatted as a two-dimensional bar code (col. 6, lines 14-32). MRCI 206 contains information related to the recipient, the sender, the content of the business reply mail piece, and one or more set of instructions associated with the selection areas 202 intended for marking by the recipient (col. 6, lines 33-37). Thus, in Pintsov, information printed on the business reply mail piece is obtained by scanning bar code 206. Pintsov does not disclose or suggest automatically reading human-readable text using optical character recognition techniques.

As should be clear from the discussion above, each of claims 1, 11, and 21 patentably distinguishes over Pintsov. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of these claims be withdrawn.

Claims 2-10 depend from claim 1, claims 12-20 depend from claim 11, and claims 22-31 depend from claim 21. Each of these claims is patentable for at least the same reasons as its respective independent claim. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of each of these claims be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Dated: November 14, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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